

META-PRAGMATIC FUNCTION: A CASE STUDY OF STUDENTS' DAILY CONVERSATION

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ABSTRACT

A daily conversation seems like the application of language use. It is less interesting to dig rather than speech, movie, etc. The study aims to examine the metapragmatic function and metalinguistic items used in the daily conversation which will be supported by the intimacy between the speakers and the addressee. The study was a qualitative method by using an interview like in the daily activity without any drift. The data were the utterance of daily conversation between the researcher and the participants. The themes of every conversation are different based on the participants' situation at that time. The data were analyzed descriptively. The goal of this study is to find the metapragmatic function used by the English students to get a reference for all about the use of the metapragmatic function. The first step conducted is transcription. We know that transcription is a crucial step in data analysis (Kowal & Oconnell, 2014). Then, the writer tried to break down the interview transcriptions by doing coding. The study showed that the students used almost metapragmatic function and metalinguistic items in their conversation unconsciously.

KEYWORDS: *Metapragmatic, Metalinguistic, Conversation, Utterance & Speech*

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INTRODUCTION

As a human being, people need to communicate and understand to engage each other. They used to communicate directly to the person to convey their opinion or perception about something. They merely sent the letter each other if they are separated by space. Nowadays, they can use technology to communicate each other. They can communicate certainly through email, telephone, short message or chatting application. One of the popular tools that people use today is WhatsApp application. It can be downloaded freely from the internet and can be applied effectively and efficiently. But, involving in direct communication gives more information rather than using the application because people can see all things that happened in the conversation such as mimic and gesture.

Probably, any conversation can be interpreted differently. It depends on the speakers' intention to the addressee in the conversation or interaction. The meaning of the chats sometimes understood differently based on the addressee's common ground or background knowledge. It also influences by their daily conversation whether they are in the pragmatic or meta-pragmatic awareness area. It can be in the form of culture. It is supported by an expert argument that culture is something that happened to anyone then it needs personal experience to understand it which they can across the entire situation, language and culture because the awareness of cultural will attribute to the level of subjectivity ((Li & Gao, 2017). This is also supported by another expert who stated that metapragmatics is not about the function of individual utterances or interactions, but is concerned with the overarching set of cultural beliefs about the nature of interactions (Overstreet, 2015). This can be indicated that cultural beliefs have a deal in the conversation happened in

the society.

The meaning of the utterances in the conversation between the speaker and the hearer can be understood not only from the utterances but also from the interference due to the relationship between them (Laila, Subroto, & Tarjana, 2008). The interaction between the persons who involved in the conversation will be different in terms of their relationship each other which can lead them more intimate when they are in the conversation itself. The speakers basically have their hidden agenda when they speak to the hearers and their ways to convey meaning through utterance plays an important role to make the hearers understand or to lead them to the speakers' goal. The utterance can be in the metapragmatic form which can lead the hearers to understand the speakers' intentions. However, sometimes the hearers cannot understand all the speakers' utterance because of their limitation of common ground.

Human tend to produce utterance to serve different idea in the different situation. The hearers face some problems when they are trying to interpret the utterances pragmatically. Sometimes the speakers use metapragmatic marking in order to make the hearers understand what they mean about. Therefore, speakers demand the hearers or the addressee understand the utterances. It may also happen in the daily conversation between friends, teachers and students and family discourse.

Metapragmatic awareness could be known as the reflection of the usage of the words in line with the terminology (Caffi, 2007; Liu & Liu, 2017; Lucy, 1993) that makes the language use and the verbal behavioral are related. Then, the awareness could not be measured correctly but it is easy to speculate. Hence, meta-pragmatic awareness is defined as knowledge of the social meaning of variable second language forms and awareness of the ways in which these forms mark different aspects of social contexts (Kinger & Farrell, 2004). Other experts defined metapragmatic from a functional perspective, Hübner and Bublitz (2007:6) in Liu & Liu (2017) define metapragmatics as means of commenting on and interfering the ongoing discourse or text in the form of meta-utterances. This definition refers to two main points namely commenting and interfering in every discourse. It is expected by doing those two main points the hearers can understand the meaning of the conversation as well as the speakers. Furthermore, Metapragmatics is the reflexivity of the human ability to reflect on the pragmatics of language use and the study of language (Overstreet, 2015).

The metapragmatic awareness can be known from the classification written by an expert (Grundy, 2008) who categorizes the metapragmatic function into some terms, namely:

Metapragmatic Description

Performative verbs and speech act description are the metapragmatic description which reflects the awareness of speakers' pragmatic uses and the language effect.

Self-Referential Expression

The utterances that show the speakers' referential or refers to the speakers are called Self-referential expression. The samples are like *this argument*, *my talk*, and *these perspectives*.

Discourse Markers or Pragmatic Particles

The speakers use pragmatic particles to show their awareness of the relationship between the previous statement and the next statement. The pragmatic particles are such as anyway, undoubtedly, and you know;

Sentence Adverbs

The speakers use sentence adverb to show their propositional attitude which has higher level function rather than words such as right, wrong and probable. The sentence adverbs are like frankly, regrettably, and obviously.

Hedges

The speakers use hedges to show their awareness about the content of the utterance. The words are such as sort of, in a sense, and as far as I know.

Explicit Intertextual Links

The speakers show their awareness of their further explanation. The words are like namely, for example, similarly, the former, the latter, and the next point.

Quoted and Reported Speech

The speakers show their awareness in the form of reported speech.

Mention

The speakers show their awareness by mentioning the name of something related to the content of the utterance.

Evidential

The speakers show the reliability of the utterance and what is stated by using marks such as *I suppose, I recall, what I remember, etc.*

Contextualization Cues

The awareness showed by the speakers as control items and the indication of an effect of talks use *right, so, okay, oh sorry, etc.*

People usually talk to others in order to get something or vise-versa. They use any utterances to make sure that their conversation runs well. They perhaps use metaphor to engage with their addressee. In the conversation, people can exchange any information relating to their life. There are some interesting points while they are in the conversation such as the misconception of the information. This case basically can happen when they are not in the same background knowledge. There are some related researches that talk about the conversation. Atkinson & Heritage (1984) in Shelton & Smagorinsky (2017) states that conversation is the common activity used to communicate each other in the interaction. The individual utterances in any interaction can only be interpretable by the understanding of the metapragmatics pictures (Overstreet, 2015).

Research Objectives

Reflecting on the previous elaboration, this paper aimed to analyze the metapragmatic function used by English students' in their daily conversation. Analyzing their metapragmatic function gave important information about the English students' ability in using metapragmatic in their daily conversation. By knowing their metapragmatic function, it is expected that they can use appropriate utterance in every occasion and also we can get important information about the common utterance used by the English students in their daily conversation. This can imply their ability in using English in their daily life.

Research Questions

To achieve this purpose, this paper attempted at addressing the question on

1. What are the common metapragmatic functions used by the English students in their daily conversation?
2. What are the metalinguistic items used by the students in their daily conversation?

Scope of Study

Relevant to its purpose, the paper analyzed the metapragmatic function used by English students' in their daily conversation. Analyzing their metapragmatic function gave important information about the English students' ability in using metapragmatic in their daily conversation.

Significance of the Study

This study intended to provide significance for many areas. Basically, this study tried to analyze the metapragmatic function used by English students' in their daily conversation. This study will contribute to the non-native speakers in order to make sure that they can understand about how metapragmatic function influence their utterance and the meaning it to the addressee and how well they use the metapragmatic function to convey their mind.

Definition of Terms

1. **English students:** The respondents are 4 English students of Indonesia University of education who enrolled in 2017.
2. **Daily Conversation:** The effort to communicate each other every day without knowing the theme of every conversation before. Thus, the students feel that it is just like their everyday activity.
3. **Metapragmatic:** The way speakers convey their mind without saying the real words or by using other words to reveal their intention.
4. **Function:** Terms in metapragmatic used by speakers when they are in the conversation, speech and other activities. The functions are like hedges, evidential and others.
5. **Analyzing:** The way researcher try to investigate deeply in some cases.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study was a qualitative method where the study collected data by using interview like in the daily activity without any drift. This method claimed will give information based primarily on constructivist perspective or participatory perspective or both (Cresswell, 2012). The data were about the daily conversation between the researcher and the participants. The themes of every conversation are different based on the participants' situation at that time.

Data Collection

This outline comprises details of participants involved in the study, instruments, and procedures taken in collecting data.

Participants

In this study, the respondents were 4 English students of the Indonesia University of Education who are selected

randomly by contacting them. The participants were a classmate. Thus, the researcher is easy enough to collect the data.

Instruments

This study used the interview to collect the data needed. The interview conducted between 3 until 6 minutes. Every participant get a same number of questions. The length of the conversation is different because of their answer. Some participants answer the questions simply but others not.

Data Collection Procedure

The interview was initially shared by online through phone or social media application. But, then the researcher decided to do the interview directly to get more detail information.

Data Analysis

The total of 4 respondents' interview results was analyzed descriptively. The goal of this study is to find the metapragmatic function used by the English students to get a reference for all about the use of the metapragmatic function. The first step conducted is transcription. We know that transcription is a crucial step in data analysis (Kowal & O'connell, 2014). Then, the writer tried to break down the interview transcriptions by doing coding. The coding based on the metapragmatic functions to know deeply about the metapragmatic function happened in the English students' daily conversation.

DISCUSSIONS

When we talk about pragmatic, it means that we talk about interaction. Every interaction involved communication on it. The key to understand the interaction through communication is by understanding the key of pragmatic itself. Thus, the metapragmatic functions hold a big deal on the understanding of language use. Within the participation of interaction, it is expected that the way to understand the speakers' utterances will be easier. At least, the performances include some aspects such as the use of tenses, modal auxiliary, adverb of expression, stance, and evidential which can be interpreted by the addressee well. Other indicators of metapragmatic awareness that have been classified in the previous are the metapragmatic description, self-referential expression, sentence adverb, explicit intertextual links, mention, hedges, contextualization cues, pragmatic markers, and speech reporting.

Metapragmatic Description

Being explained before, metapragmatic description involves performative verbs and speech act description that reflect the metapragmatic awareness of the speakers. The following are some examples of the respondents' statements

1. All right. Ehm..eh.. what is it. There are still a lot of things to improve. Let's say ee in terms of teachers' competence, the systems, the school fee, the buildings, the scoring systems. Almost things in many aspects, we need to consider them to be improved (R1).

Here the speech acts description <Let's say> and <terms of teachers' competence, the system, the school fee, the buldings, the scoring system> reflects the pragmatic uses and the effect of the language use. The speaker said "let's say" then continued her statement by giving some descriptions of what she is going to tell and relate them. 'Say' is one of the metalinguistic verbs that are categorized as verbs of saying. This is the way of the speakers to reflect on the events of speech. Then, the use of "ee" indicates that the speaker tried to describe something related to the topic but she needs time

to talk about. The addressee understands the intention of the speakers although the speaker sometimes forgot to use connectors to make her statements correctly like the use of “and” before “the scoring system”.

- someone’s in my eye.. you know... no, I can’t say it I can’t mention his name. it’s kind of (R2)
- Just say it: oh okay (I)

Here the speaker used speech acts description < I can’t say it> and < I can’t mention>. The speaker used those words to avoid something that is private for her. She has any interesting to someone that the addressee tried to know. Then, there are some overlaps that happened in the conversation, two of them are “just say it” and “oh okay”. This indicates that the addressee tried to understand the speaker position. He stopped to dig more into the information of that person.

Self-Referential Expression

Speakers use self-referential expressions to indicate that the statement that they utter is originally their opinion based on the real situation and the background knowledge that they have.

My opinion, it’s possible, really possible to pursue both because some people I see that they are fine and they have got the good grade but I am not that kind of persons who can concentrate on too many things. I can do multi task but on the small things or simple things but on the things like married and then pursuing education and sometimes it’s hard for me too. I ought to just focus on my study (R3).

Here the speakers try to explain her opinion by using “my opinion”. She tried to come out her mind without any pressure. One side, she believed that people can do multitasks like getting married and pursuing their education but she continued by using connector word ‘but’ that indicate that she is not sure that she can do it herself. However, she has been seeing it in the real life.

Pragmatic Particles

Speakers use pragmatic particle to relate their previous statement and the upcoming one by using pragmatic particles. The pragmatic particle is such as “you know” and “because” like the speaker’s utterance below

probably, I will not say anything first. I’d like to observe what kind ee... you know ee the level of things. Such as if just a simple thing maybe I will not say anything but if it is the big thing I’ll discuss with my friends first to solve the problem. Then I don’t confront him or her directly because I don’t like it if people do it to me. Maybe I you know I will consult with my friend maybe we can lead her or him to the right path (R3).

The speaker used the word “you know” to relate her statement and also to attract the addressee’s attention. It implied that the speaker wanted to emphasize her utterance to the addressee. However, she sometimes used a metalinguistic item like ‘ee..’ in her utterance. It helped her to think and to create utterance in her mind to fit with the addressee. The speaker also used ‘because’ to relate the cause-effect utterance like the proceeding utterance.

Hedges

Hedges as expressions are used by speakers in many forms. Speakers make a distinction between what they say and what they think about what they will say (Skelton, 1988). Particularly, it is used by the speakers to indicate the completeness and the accuracy of what is being said to reduce the risk of communication. It is usually used by the

politician or the government employee. It seems like by using this expression the audience will not judge them directly if there are some mistakes in their speech. This is an important function that helps the speakers to show their awareness of expectation or something that they want in the future. Based on the researcher's study, the students don't use hedges to show their awareness of expectation, but they use "if I am ..." to show her expectation such as the utterance below

- If I am forced to say something, I will probably ee you know I have her to talk face to face and heart to heart. If it is a guy, it will be difficult you know maybe I will remind her of what we are expected to do as an awardee and then if we see we are as public figure in a term and then maybe I will you know remind her what we do is being seen and is being watched and observed. So, I think I will still remind her not to be rude or anything and etc (R3).

Explicit Intertextual Link

An explicit intertextual link is used by the speakers show their awareness about their further explanation. The words are like namely, for example, similarly, the former, the latter, and the next point. But, in this point, the students don't use any of them to explain more in their utterance but there is a unique student who said "I mean like" to explain more in her utterance. The following is the utterance.

- wow... that's an interesting question. Uhm... the development of technology I mean like technology nowadays helps people in their daily life ehm... I mean like in terms of their activity, for example, I am the student. Technology really helps me a lot in terms of providing some sources for my course (R2).

Here the speaker stated "I mean like" in order to explain more about what she will say and also to think about what she will say in the upcoming statement. She tried to elaborate her statement by providing some relevant utterance based on the real situation in her life. Although I cannot say that this includes explicit intertextual links, but the utterance shows the speakers attention on her awareness to explain something more.

Quoted and Reported Speech

The speakers' awareness is showed by providing a statement in the form of reported speech rather than speech act description. Reporting speech represents the ability to refer to the speech acts of others (Overstreet, 2015). The following is the sample of reported speech in the daily conversation:

- I think that it's about privacy. They can talk to me, they can tell me but they also have their own right to not talk about it to me. Like whatever they like (R4).

The utterance "I think that it's about privacy" is one of the quoted speech stated by the speaker to show her awareness about something. She tried to gloss the addressee that something must be privacy.

Evidentials

The speakers used the mark to emphasize the reliability of the utterance, such as "I suppose, what I remember, I recall, etc". These are called memory claims that give reference to the evidentiality of what the speakers' utterance about.

- I can't elaborate more because you know when I once I once when I once move in Bandung, I have no one. They are like my second family here (R4).

Based on the conversation that the researcher analyze, he did not find words that implicate that it is evidential

word but considering to the utterance, he found that the student does not use it but she uses words “when I once” means that she tried to recall her experience about her life. However, she sometimes stuck on her speech like we can see from the script that she restates the words “I once” that indicated that she try to remember and think about what she would like to say for the upcoming utterance.

Contextualization Cues

Another metapragmatic function to show the speakers’ awareness is contextualization cues. It is the feature of metapragmatic that contributes to the contextual presuppositions. The words that the speakers can use are like right, okay, sorry, etc.

- Alright. Ehm..eh.. what is it. There are still a lot of things to improve. Let’s say ee in terms of teachers’ competence, the systems, the school fee, the buildings, the scoring systems. Almost things in many aspects, we need to consider them to be improved (R1).

Here the speaker used “alright” to take a part in the conversation. Then continued her utterance. She practically used it to indicate her awareness of what the other speaker talk.

Metalinguistic Items

The conversation happened between the speakers and the addressees, known as students and interviewer, showed many metalinguistic items that the students used to make the conversation run. The metalinguistic items used are like “eh ..., e, eem..., ehm, ee, oh okay, ehe, ohh... you know, ummm, I mean like, the thethe, and yeah. Those words come up from the conversation which can be implied that the students use those words in order to reduce miss understanding between the speakers and the addressee. The following are the classification words of metalinguistic items.

Table 1

Metalinguistic Items	Usage
eh ..., e, eem.. ehm, ee, ummm and ehe	A word used in talk in which a speaker tries to think what he would like to say. It’s around 2 seconds.
oh okay and yeah	A word used in talk in which a speaker agrees with another speaker utterance.
ohh...	A word used in talk in which a speaker expresses her/ his surprising.
you know	A clause used in talk in which a speaker tries to take the addressee’s attention.
I mean like	A clause used in talk in which a speaker tries to elaborate more explanation.
the thethe	A repeating words used in talk in which a speakers tries to think what she/ he will say for upcoming utterance.

CONCLUSIONS

There are nine metapragmatic functions that have been classified. The students actually used those nine functions. But, almost the students used the metapragmatic description in which they used speech act description and performative verbs in the utterance. But, it doesn’t mean that other functions did not have any role in the conversation.

The other functions give any effect on the understanding of the addressee toward the speakers' utterance. Besides, the speakers also used metalinguistic items to fit with the conversation. This indicates that the speakers' utterances involve metalinguistic items in which help the speakers and the addressee to understand the content of the conversation.

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